

tion. The time for this "sinless incarnation" is popularly supposed to be near at hand. The Moslems look for Imam Mahdi as a forerunner of Al Masih (Christ), who will come down from heaven to destroy Dajjal, the antichrist from the Moslem standpoint. The Moslem community is very little while going here and going there to see the Mahdi, the John Baptist of Christ, who is to come again. The fanaticism of Islam over the Mahdi, who, it was alleged, had come into the Soudan, stopped the progress of the British and broke the power of the Khedive of Egypt. Persia is full of the thought of the Mahdi. It is part of God's plan to work through great movements of mind, like the great expectations which were found widespread of a great coming One, not only among Jews, but among Persians, like the Magi, who, star worshippers as they were, followed the star of Bethlehem.

By Way of Illustration.

Verses 1 and 2. Some astronomers conjecture that Alcyone is the center around which the whole sidereal system revolves. Whether that be true or not, it is undeniably certain that the star of Bethlehem is the center of this world's spiritual astronomy. If that star had never risen on a dark and sin-cursed world, O how differently its history would read! That Christmas night brought Christ. With Christ came the Gospel of human brotherhood and the elevation of woman; with Christ came the highest civilization and the purest philanthropy; with Christ came Calvary's atoning sacrifice for sin; with Christ came victory over death and the grave.

"Where is he that is born King of the Jews?" We are willing enough to take him as Saviour; we hesitate to make him king. We forget that God has exalted him to be prince as well as Saviour. And the divine order is irreversible. Put the sun in its central throne, and all the motions of the planets assume a beautiful order. Put Jesus on the throne of life, and all things fall into harmony and peace. Seek first the kingdom of God, and all things are yours.

Verses 9. "The star....went before them." They followed the star. They acted on all the light they had; and they were "wise men" because they were seekers of truth. I do not know how much knowledge they had. I do know that they showed their knowledge by seeking more. I fancy it cost them some thing to follow that star. Explorers have to be brave men; they are almost always considered fanatics, but where should we be to-day without our explorers? There is help for us in following this "star"; not a sun, but a star!—not following much light, but being true to the light we have. Ah, it will bring us sometime to the

very feet of the blessed Christ himself! Only follow the light you have. Be true to the starlight, and it will bring you to the light of the sun.

Verses 11. Bring gold to the Christ as you adore him this blessed Christmas time. Will you give gifts to each other, and none to the very one whose birthday we celebrate? But for Christ's birthday all other birthdays would be occasions for bitterest weeping instead of joyous greeting. Or if you have not gold to bring, we all have frankincense to offer. This precious substance was the chief constituent of the incense, the ascending smoke from which so beautifully symbolized prayer as it rose before the mercy seat. Pray especially for God's work and his workers at Christmas time. And some sad and bruised heart may have the bitter but precious myrrh to offer the Christ. Gather up the little garments the baby used to wear—she wears shining robes now—and send them to the nearest deaconess "poor closet." Bring out the precious keepsakes. If the coins and east-off jewelry laid away in napkins in this country could all be brought forth for God's work, it would mean scores of souls saved through the agencies they would set in motion. Or, perhaps it is your own life you have to offer. God has hedged your way—brought you face to face with an awful sorrow. You wonder what you will do with your broken and empty life. Give it to God in special service. He will restore it, fill it, make it glow with heavenly brightness, as you minister to him in his poor and needy children, or carry the knowledge of him to those who sit in the shadow.

The Teachers' Meeting.

Locate the East, Bethlehem, Jerusalem.... Give some account of Herod.... Distinguish between this Herod and others of the same name.... The wise men, who they were.... The star, what it was.... (Avoid long discussions on these subjects.) Note four classes of people, and their various feelings toward Christ.... The example of the wise men: (1) Purpose; (2) Earnestness; (3) Faith; (4) —; (5) —; (6) —.... Significance of the gifts to Jesus.... How we should seek him.... What we should give him.

References.

FREEMAN. Ver. 1: The Magi, 630. Ver. 2: The Star of the King, 631. Ver. 11: Presents, 64. FOSTER'S CYCLOPEDIA. Ver. 9: Poetical, 765. Ver. 11: Prose, 6012, 7847, 8910, 8911, 10758, 11991. Ver. 12: 5080, 5083, 5084. Ver. 13: Prose, 12101. Ver. 14: Prose, 9491, 8758, 3873. Ver. 15: Prose, 2947, 2938, 8839, 10372. Ver. 16: Prose, 10280, 4104. Ver. 17: Prose, 3345, 1385, 2388, 4132, 9975. Ver. 18: Prose, 10507. Ver. 21: Prose, 9199.